

IMPRESSIONS OF ITALY.

My friend wrote that the cholera was no longer in Italy, and that I might come without fear of quarantine, either by land or by water. I had been waiting a fortnight in hopes of receiving this intelligence, so I quickly packed up my portmanteau and set off for Rome.

It was a journey of nearly four weeks, when I had hoped as many days would almost suffice, but these weeks were crowded with the most delightful impressions of my life. I shall not attempt to record them. A few only of the vividest will find a place in this transcript of travel.

Never shone the moon with whiter radiance than through the chestnut trees fringing the magnificent road leading by Chambery over the Alpine pass of Mont Cenis, on the night I passed in the coupé of the diligence *en route* for Turin. I had intended going to Italy by way of Marseilles and the steamer to Civita Vecchia, but two difficulties intervened. 1st. There was not water enough in the Rhone for the steamboats on which I depended for getting to Valence, then the northern terminus of the Marseilles railway, and 2d, the quarantine yet remained in full force in the Italian ports, my friend's letter to the contrary notwithstanding. So I was forced again to scale the Alps.

It is a fine pass—that of Mont Cenis, and the road winds to the top by grand sweeps to the right and left, tedious in the ascent, but very imposing. Constantly crossing the road in a direct line is the telegraph, striding over the mountains, its posts indicating, one might fancy, the footsteps of a giant. You may count them, one above the other, fifty, sixty, seventy, till the eye no longer marks so slender an object. The electric current runs along its wire with equal celerity over Alps as on the plain—*il n'y a plus des Pyrénées* for that subtle agent.

As we crawl up the road, there comes down at a rattling pace a crowded diligence. In the coupé sits a friend from my own Virginia home, whom I have not seen since his arrival in Europe. I endeavor to attract his attention by every

means in my power, but he does not see me, and in a minute or two, the diligence is far down the mountain-side. We are not permitted to meet each other, though so near. How often in life do we not thus just miss the attainment of good which would be all the more satisfactory from its being unexpected. There are narrow escapes from blessings as from woes, and happy are they who remain unconscious of what they have lost. Let us not grumble, however, who know of the denied enjoyment, for possibly it might have prevented the realization of higher and more ardently wished-for ends. *I did* think it hard luck, at the time, that I could not have five minutes' talk with my friend, but I learned afterwards that, had I been allowed this privilege, in all probability I should never have seen Rome. He was returning to Paris, after an ineffectual attempt to pass the boundaries of Tuscany, and was it likely that I should succeed where he had failed? Would I not have turned back?

After hours of slow progression, we arrive at the top, where a cold, driving wind, heavily charged with mist and snow, sweeps across the table-land on which stands the Hospice. Passing this and reaching the edge of the mountain on the Italian side, where the road can be traced for miles in its windings below, we see, beyond the compass of the cloud, which hangs like a dark tent over our heads, the sunny distant fields of Italy. Italia, O Italia! thou that hast the fatal gift of beauty, and so forth, can it be that the landscape I see spread out in such tranquil loveliness yonder is thine own? Mr. Murray says it is—and I am blest in so believing.

Around the huge mountain we go, like a fly on the outside of an orange, yet descending rapidly, and after awhile we reach the station of the Susa railway, *Strada Ferrata* they call it here, whence a train takes us in an hour and a half to Turin.

I would willingly have lingered longer in Turin, where the hills, sparkling with villas, rise so gracefully from the "wandering Po," and a long line of silver, from

Monte Rosa to the farthest point of the northern horizon, greets the eye looking across the rolling plains of Piedmont; where the white truffles come to enlarge one's ideas of a dinner, and the red Asti falls soothingly on the tongue—

A fermentation and a flask, indeed,
Where Bacchus' self might seem to set his
seal

To give the world assurance of a wine.

With an old acquaintance residing in Turin, I walked through its straight and stately streets, crossing each other at right angles like those of Philadelphia, and presenting lofty masses of daring architecture, and wandered through the badly-lighted gallery of paintings, where there is a Velasquez which an artist might profitably go from any part of the world to study, and visited the Cathedral over whose smooth pavement the fleas ran riot, and then paid my bill at the hotel Feder and took the train for Genoa.

One remarkable phase was exhibited by Turin, in some of its larger squares, at the time of my visit—that of an old city looking quite new, as if just from the builder's hands. By far the greater portion of Turin was built four hundred years ago, after the designs of architects who were even more ambitious than Palladio, but the houses, which are of rough brick, were never stuccoed until 1854. Then, centuries after their erection, for the first time, were they made to give the striking effect contemplated by those who planned them. Combined with this renovation of the ancient part of the city, the extension of the suburbs outside the barrier gives to Turin an aspect unfamiliar in Italy and somewhat like that of an American town.

The railway to Genoa is one of the finest in the world. Passing through a rich and beautiful country to Alessandria, it strikes thence the main chain of the Appenines, which it pierces by means of eleven tunnels, one of them, at Ponte Decimo, nearly six miles in length. I heard a Philadelphian complaining, some time after my visit to Italy, that he was prevailed upon to take the land route,

through Turin and across the Alps, in returning from Rome to Paris, that he might see the country, and that directly after leaving Genoa they entered a tunnel from which they never emerged until they reached Turin. His views of the country had been entirely subterraneous.

Having conquered the Appenines, the road glides smoothly on towards the Mediterranean, and enters Genoa the Proud, under the very walls of the palace of the Dorias! The Nineteenth Century puffs the smoke of its engines against the stateliest monuments of the glory of the Sixteenth.

The conflict of the old and new civilizations impresses one at every turn in the splendid and decayed old city. After years of dilapidation and ruin in which the power of its Doges had melted away and its once extensive commerce had dwindled into the petty trade of a few shallops, the ebbing wave of its ancient prosperity met the advancing tide of modern industry, and again Genoa bids fair to rival the maritime importance of the most thriving sea-ports. I sat on the balcony of the Hotel of the Maltese Cross, where the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem had looked out upon the blue sea—the sea which swells in the Psalms of David, and was cut by the adventurous prow of St. Paul, the barren, wine-coloured ocean of Homer, which rolls in the

Βῆ δ' ἄκρων παρα θίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,

the sea associated with so much of the grandest poetry of the past—and musing on the romance and song which have been connected with it in later days, I saw the black volume ascending from the smoke-stack of a first class steamer, and recognised in it the inauguration of another day for Genova la Superba. Directly under the balcony ran the railway down to the sea-side, and along by the houses in whose shadow Columbus played in the condition of small boy, four centuries ago, heavily-loaded freight trains were continually passing, pulled by American locomotives. The opening of this road is one of the most important of those great measures which have distinguished

the present King of Sardinia as a wise and liberal monarch, and connecting, as the road does, the rich grain-growing region of Piedmont with the waters of the Mediterranean, it cannot fail to give an impetus to the country which must soon place it among the most prosperous of European States.

Genoa is known as the city of palaces, and such indeed it is, but the palazzo now serves other uses than those for which it was erected. The cobbler pursues his humble calling in a palace, and is not thought ultra-crepidarian for so doing; beneath the palatial arches which once echoed the soft whispers of love, the vulgar voice of trade daily resounds; it is the banquetting-hall of a palace of the Crusaders in which you dine; and in the court-yard of a ducal residence, where fountains plashed of yore to the music of serenades, I found the carriage and horses of my friend, Carlo Caretti, who agreed for the sum of one hundred and sixty francs to place the same at my disposal for a three days' journey to Pisa.

In the decline of Genoa, sunk from the condition of a sovereign state to that of a dependency, the palaces, vacated by their impoverished owners, were put into the occupancy of anybody who would rent them at prices comparatively nominal; but the day is not distant when another class of princes will arise from the opulent mercantile population of Genoa to renew the fallen grandeur, and freshen the faded magnificence of these superb mansions, and when the city may again arrogate to itself with reason the lofty title by which it was formerly designated.

Carlo agreed, as I said, to take me to Pisa. Having been put on my guard as to the faithlessness of Italians in all contracts which have not been reduced to writing, I suggested to him that he should draw up and sign a paper to the effect of his verbal agreement, which he did with so much perspicuity and exactness, that I have preserved the document as a model for imitation should I ever be charged with the execution of a treaty. In reply to my request for certificates of character, he produced a famous one from Silvio Pellico, in a beautiful handwriting, which

I was rather pleased than otherwise to find he would not sell me when I offered him a napoleon for it. He was delighted to know I had read *Mie Prigione*, and declared there could be little doubt we should get along pleasantly together. And so we did, Carlo, and I shall never regret that under your auspices and in your *vettura* I went along the sea-shore to Pisa.

There surely cannot be a more interesting and delightful road in the world than that along the margin of the Mediterranean at this part of the Italian peninsula. Now winding in a brilliant crescent round a peaceful bay, and now rising to the crest of the Appenines 2,000 feet above the water—here led by the boldest viaducts over lonely gorges, and afterwards descending through chestnut forests, olive orchards and orange bowers to some picturesque village nestling under the mountains by the sparkling sea, it offers every variety of landscape and marine view to the delighted eye of the traveller. Nor is it without pleasing and touching suggestions of its own. The sight of the stars and stripes floating from the masthead of the flagship of the American squadron at Spezzia, recalls the imagination from the past, where it has been wandering among corsairs and buccaneers; the image of Shelley seems to rise from the blue waters that closed over him; the gleaming quarries of Carrara speak to us of the forms of beauty which have been struck out from the rock by departed but immortal genius; and the Leaning Tower of Pisa at last lifts its singular and striking galleries against the sky of evening, to remind us of the happy time when we first admired it in the geography as one of the "wonders of the world." Along the road, too, the peculiar costume of the inhabitants, the rich music of their conversation, the remarkable appearance of their dwellings, all afford us delight and amusement. What a festive look has the house we are approaching! The open windows show us ladies and gentlemen who have assembled upon some occasion of rejoicing, bird cages are hanging between the sumptuous curtains, and from

the upper casement a girl is waving a handkerchief; it is like a scene out of Goldoni; but, coming nearer, we perceive that it is all a sham, the ladies are unreal and their beaux shadows, the birds are humbugs, the pretty maiden is a creature of the fancy; in other words, the wall of the house towards us, which has presented this pleasant and cheerful aspect, is a dead wall, and what we have seen has been only a painting on its surface. The house itself, though its front is decorated with imitations of Corinthian columns, is a shabby affair enough, and green lizards are crawling over the doorstep, above which red oranges are drooping in tempting abundance. I confess the people interested me even more than the country. Debased as the lowest of them are, there is not a rascal of them all that does not wear his rags with a dignity and an air becoming a prince, and in the step and look of the women there yet remains a grace and a fire such as belong to the Italian heroines of fiction and poetry. One cannot help indulging the hope that for a race which exhibits, after long years of misrule and degradation, so many traces of their noble origin, a better fate is in store; that the dream of Machiavelli may yet be accomplished in a political union of all the Italian provinces, under a government which shall revive the former glories of a land illustrated by the genius of Dante and the rule of Cosmo.

Such a feeling of hope for Italy took possession of me very strongly in my first walk in Florence, when rambling at sunrise, I knew not whither, I came by accident into the short street, on either side and across one end of which stands the Uffizi Palace, in its form of a parallelogram. There around me stood the great men of the palmy days of Florence—Galileo and Petrarch, Lorenzo and Michael Angelo, graven by the hands of modern artists, and in the solitude of the place at that early hour, I could almost fancy myself in their living presence. What greatness was here! And then I turned from the spot, and to the lively strains of a fine military band there marched across the bridge of Santa Trinita three companies

of white-coated Austrian soldiers, bringing distinctly before me the present subjugation of the Florentines.

I have noted something of national animosities in the course of my life, but never have I seen anything approaching the deep-seated, and all the more bitter because impotent, hatred of the Italians for the Austrians. The name of Austria brings a curse to a Florentine's lips, and make him feel for a dagger. A friend who had lived long in Florence informed me that a funeral of one of the foreign soldiery never failed to call forth a fervent "Thank God!" from every huckster in the market-place. I can imagine that should the time ever come for vengeance, it will be meted out with relentless severity.

Of the galleries of Florence—the world-renowned Pitti, and the great treasury of art known as the Uffizi, I hardly dare to speak, for the reader has heard so much of them that he is already familiar with their most celebrated pieces. With suspended breath I approached the Tribune, where the Venus de Medici has stood so long enchanting the world, and after having gazed in silence for half an hour on that beauteous impersonation of the morning-star, I turned away abashed that I had been so little affected by it. To say that it is not the perfection of grace would be to write one's self down a dullard. But it did not subdue me in the sense of the stanza in Childe Harold; it spoke to me of no realm of beauty whose inhabitants were cast in that mould of exquisite proportion; it exercised no spell over my imagination, such as did the scattered children of the Niobe, in another apartment of the same gallery, with the shafts of Apollo hurtling among them. What a passion is fused into the marble, and what intensity of anguish contorts the noble features of the mother and changes her beauty into despair!

So great is the variety of works of art in the Uffizi, that I scarcely think any two persons, not artists, could come away from it agreeing as to the six pieces which had pleased them most. It would be no bad indication of mental character to find what painting or statue had afforded a

man the highest gratification, among so many appealing to such different emotions. Raphael is represented in the Tribune in five pictures of great sweetness and delicacy. Of these perhaps the Madonna of the Goldfinch is most characteristic of the artist. It is full of that sensibility which breathes through all the pictures of the young dreamer of Urbino, though it but faintly foreshadows the power and depth of feeling expressed in his later works. One acquires an affection for Raphael from familiarity with his glorious creations, and learns to pronounce a blessing upon him as the eye rests on another of his efforts. How surely does every touch of his pencil betray purity of purpose combined with genius of the most elevated kind, and how different is our estimate of the man, from that we form of Titian from the Venus on the wall just opposite! Considered in a mere artistic point of view, or—to use the Germanism I despise—objectively, nothing has ever been done on canvass more perfect than this painting. The voluptuous charms of female beauty are here portrayed with a warmth of colouring that belongs to Titian alone; but the sensual pervades every line of the naked form, and the Venus herself seems quite conscious of her nudity which gives the last touch of the impure to the whole picture. It seems like a profanation that the air which is hallowed by the presence of Raphael's Virgin should hang around the meretricious graces of this earthly conception.

Of a class of pictures, of which it is impossible to deny the merit, but which you must regret to have seen, I know not one which can be compared with the Head of the Medusa by Leonardo da Vinci. The head is represented as just severed from the body and thrown upon a clammy pavement, and the snakes are crested above the pale face which has settled into a sweet calm. The beholder stands before it in terrified admiration. It is impossible to forget it, and the idea brings a shudder that you must frequently see it hereafter among the hideous apparitions of the land of dreams.

But the Uffizi, with all its wonderful

bronzes, and marbles, and paintings, is a less attractive place of resort than the Pitti Palace. This charming range of apartments contains, with the exception of the Dresden gallery, the finest collection of pictures in the world, and the disposition of them is so admirable, with the sun streaming in liberal shafts of light through the lofty windows, and the appointments and decorations of the rooms withal are so aristocratic, the scagliola floors, the comfortable couches, the rich frescoes on the ceiling, and the superb tables of Florentine mosaic, that it is a luxury to walk up and down or recline at ease in the gallery, looking at the Madonnas and Popes, the heroes and goddesses upon the antique walls.

Here again it is Raphael that most of all enchants you, in the celestial Madonna della Seggiola—a picture which, like that at Dresden, has set at defiance the efforts of the copyists, who have never been able to catch the divine something, the *je ne sais quoi* of expression, which renders it the most exquisite portrayal of maternal tenderness that the whole range of art—the works of Raphael himself only excepted—can furnish. The mingling of the mortal with the immortal attributes, which I have already mentioned in speaking of the Sistine Madonna, makes this painting almost holy; and if I thought it less affecting and powerful than the soaring Virgin of Pope Sixtus, it is because of the difference of treatment in the subject. There is a domesticity, so to speak, in the Madonna of the chair which the other has not. In the one picture Mary is an angel translated to earth, in the other a woman transfigured in the skies—in both there is a depth of meaning in the eyes of the infant Jesus that is inexpressibly touching, as if in that earnest and sorrowful gaze he saw all that lay hidden in the distant future from the vision of his mother.

There are more than five hundred pictures in the Pitti Palace, of which all that are not of great merit may be counted on the fingers, and I could go on to speak of other gems, but that my criticisms may be thought as tedious as they are

uninformed by any acquaintance with painting as an art. But one picture of Titian, which I have never seen commended as a *chef d'œuvre*, afforded me so much gratification that I quite forgot the immodesty of the Venus of the Tribune. The catalogue entitled it the *Bella di Tiziano*. It is the portrait of a lady in a rich dress fitting closely around the neck, and almost hiding from view even those ivory undulations of shoulders which we may see at any evening party—a lady of such majesty of person, and with so much of refinement and delicacy in her lovely patrician features, that I felt like making a bow whenever I passed her.

The churches of Florence are objects of the greatest interest, and the mere list of them, together with what they contain, fills thirty-six closely printed pages in Murray's Hand-Book. Santa Croce, hallowed by the ashes of the mighty dead, is the first for which the stranger inquires, and as he walks through its sombre aisles, and looks at the stiff and pompous allegories in marble, in which the frozen muses are represented as weeping above the remains of poets, and statesmen, and artists, the question of taste at once arises—would not a simple tablet be more effective? Would not the name of Michael Angelo, surmounted by the bust of that battered-looking old gentleman, be a more fitting tribute to his memory than this elaborate tomb, with the three figures of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture mourning for his loss? If there were no other objection to such memorials, it were enough that frequently the most imposing in the mausoleum marks the resting-place of somebody, that few who look upon it have ever heard of. At Westminster Abbey there are many fine tombs erected to the illustrious obscure; and in the Santa Croce, the Chancellor Marsuppini is honored with a marble apotheosis far more magnificent than Dante's or Alfieri's, or any of them. Byron does not speak of Marsuppini in his stanza about Santa Croce, and I will venture to say the reader who has not been there, now sees his name for the first time.

Of the architecture of Florence, the

Cathedral is perhaps the most imposing specimen. The dome of this building, the work of Brunelleschi, rises above the roofs of the city in swelling superiority, sharing the upper air with the Campanile by its side. This latter structure, says Mr. Ruskin, rose before me like a mountain of alabaster, delicate as a rose-leaf, and beautiful as a morning-cloud. I do not know that I quote his exact language, but I certainly did not share his enthusiasm. Graceful the Campanile certainly is, but the mixture of Grecian and Gothic was not altogether pleasing, while the minuteness of its details detracts in some measure from the effect of the whole. The interior of the Cathedral is very striking. I walked through it one morning during service, and though the day was bright out of doors, the light was rendered so dim by the stained windows, that the priests and choristers had to avail themselves of shaded lamps to read from the books before them. The Rembrandt effects produced by those scattered balls of fire under the gloom of the immense dome were not lost upon my companion, Buchanan Read, who will no doubt reproduce them some day in verse or in oils.

The employment of visiting galleries and churches is a most laborious one, as the traveller in Europe very soon discovers; but in Florence, it is less exhausting than elsewhere for the relief afforded by the numerous walks and drives in the open air. If you have been wearied out by a morning at the Uffizi, a drive in the afternoon to Fiesole will prove refreshing, and give you a better sunset over Val d'Arno than any of Claude's; the fatigue of rummaging in the chapels of old basilicas is compensated by a quiet evening stroll in the prim and courtly avenues of the Boboli Gardens; and the sense of having been bored, which may possibly linger on the mind after visiting the house of Michael Angelo, or the Laurentian Library, will be quickly dispelled by whirling in an open carriage through the fair fields of the gay Cascine.

There are few grounds more elegant than the Cascine, and none where what one sees and hears will linger longer in his memory. Though uniform in surface,

and not more than two miles in length by three-quarters of a mile in width, it is marked by every variety of growth, and noble depths of shade refresh the eye while following its winding roads. There the celebrities of Florence are to be seen on the early autumnal afternoons—Rossini sometimes goes to hear his own music played by the Austrian band with an expression that must delight the old composer, and many a beauty who has flourished in the Continental Courts, and been the subject of gossip from Madrid to St. Petersburg, displays her diamonds and rouge in the ring where the carriages stop during the performance of the music. Not far from the entrance, and immediately in front of the dairy houses of the Grand Duke, from which the Cascine derive their name, the band is stationed, and around it the company collects returning from the tour of the grounds. The intervals between the pieces are filled up with conversation, flirting, giving away bouquets which the importunate and not overneat flower-girls compel the gentlemen to buy, and a general exchange of glances from carriage to carriage. A livelier and more brilliant sight one does not often enjoy, while the music is above and beyond all praise. If anything could reconcile the Italian to Austrian rule, it would be such Orphic strains from Austrian musicians, and, charmed by the exquisite harmony, the degenerate children of the land of song might be content to dwell in slavery forever. We are told that a blind man once said that in the sound of a trumpet he recognised the colour of scarlet—one might fancy that to the blind these performances would seem tapestries rich in colouring, or pictures grand in effects; that such concerts would be to them galleries full of battle-pieces, and martyrdoms, and annunciations; that in the full burst of the instruments they may witness a charge of cavalry, and in the dying cadence of a pathetic melody see a Madonna smiling down on them from heaven.

There is a pleasant American society in Florence, composed of artists and their families, and lovers of art; and in the studios of Powers, Read, Hart, and

others of our sculptors and painters may be constantly met representatives of every part of the United States. Read had on his easel, during my sojourn in Florence, a sky-woven poem on which he worked only when under the inspiration of both his muses. It was the story of the lost Pleiad. Upon a background of the deepest blue six angelic figures are floating, and on the brow of each there blazes a star. A seventh figure is represented falling to earth rayless and starless. In the rooms of Gould, a Virginia artist, I saw some beautiful Eastern studies; and a new claimant for the honours of sculpture, Mr. Barbee of Page county, Virginia, had just finished a charming composition, the *Coquette*, which was universally admired.

If the conversation of poets and authors in private might be mentioned with as much freedom as the works of artists, I could refer here to the literary circle of Florence, and tell of a delightful evening with Lever, the author of *Charles O'Malley*, and of a talk with Mrs. Browning, who was anxious to hear all I could tell her of Poe; but I forbear playing reporter, and shall have as little to say of other hospitalities which can never be forgotten. The companion of my Florentine rambles, whose vivacity and good-humour lent so much pleasure to other Italian experiences, will long remember, I am sure, the evenings with the kind and cultivated family in the Piazza Soderini, and must retain some agreeable recollections of the *Cafè Doney* and the *table d'hôte New-York*.

The malle post from Siena to Rome pursues a wild and lonely route across a low range of the Apennines, and the hours of departure are so regulated that two nights and a day are spent on the road. The miserable towns which lie scattered, at considerable distances apart, along the way, offer little to please the eye, or gratify the hungry appetite, while the vehicle has no sooner entered one of them than a guerilla force of custom-house agents, postilions and other condottieri,

surround the *dogana* at which it is to stop, where also comes a loose, disorderly army of fleas—the most rapacious specimens of humanity and entomology that I ever had the ill luck to encounter. The malle-post is a cozy affair enough, with seats for two persons, besides the conductor, who has charge of the papal mails. This official is a bluff, good-humoured individual, first seen by us in a fine uniform, consisting of a rather showy coat and a small blue cap decorated with the pontifical arms, which coat and cap are sported with an air in the towns and villages, and afterwards exchanged *en route* for less dazzling ones, and put away under the seat in a mysterious box which contains bad tobacco, printed documents in blank with the keys of St. Peter at the top, day-before-yesterday's Roman newspaper, a long wax taper coiled up like a ship's cable, and some refreshments, of which all, including the pears and grapes, seem strongly flavored with garlic. The conductor speaks French, and is quite communicative, giving us his views of the dignity and importance of the States of the Church, which he appears to consider the Light and Ruler of the world. He crosses himself at the road-side chapels and swears at all the stable boys, and is altogether a very jolly, pious, polite, energetic, and fragrant conductor, of whom Pius IX. may be proud. The malle-post has no driver, the right wheel-horse being surmounted and adorned by a postilion, who is changed every five or six miles, and who collects a paul or two from the passengers upon leaving, by way of *souvenir*. Thus it is that we jog along the dreary road, until the second night closes upon us with rain, and we begin to wish heartily the journey was over and we ourselves within the walls of the Eternal City.

The road appears really so admirably well suited to the prosecution of highway robbery that, as the darkness thickens and the grim hills enclose us around, I venture to ask our conductor concerning banditti. There are very few now, he says, formerly the road had a very bad character, but it is not more than once a year or so that the mails are ever stopped.

This is consoling; but he says also that several months have elapsed since an attack—so that it is about time the bandits were again on the highway, and what juncture so favorable to their designs as this dark, wet, uncomfortable night, when we cannot see the horses?

I was dozing in the corner of the carriage—it might have been near midnight—when suddenly a bright glare of light was thrown into the interior, which revealed my companion and the conductor, both heavily locked in sleep. The first object which greeted me at the window was the particularly bright barrel of a blunderbuss, behind which a heavy moustache curled in advance of a countenance exceedingly ferocious and Fra Diavolo-like.

The brigands have come, thought I; and I began to feel nervously for my port-monnaie which I was rather gratified to think had in it the mild sum of two scudi, five pauls.

Some questions, unintelligible to me, then came from the moustache in a deep barytone, which had the effect of arousing my fellow-travellers to the exigencies of the situation.

I had my port-monnaie ready for instant delivery, and was concerting some wretched schemes for the concealment of my watch, which I did not wish, for several reasons, to surrender, when it occurred to me that I would ask the conductor the meaning of the moustache, and the blunderbuss, and so forth.

Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça? said I.

Ah, Monsieur, soyez tranquille, c'est le carabinier, said he.

And he then went on to explain, that, in consequence of the frequent robberies on the road in former years, the Pope had established along it a band of carabineers for the protection of travellers and the mails, and that the moustache was one of them, who had merely stopped the coach to inquire if all was right.

"Blessings on the Pope!" said I, and fell back into a profound slumber, from which I was at last awakened by a banging at a great gateway, with knocks louder and more frequent than those

rattled upon the door of the castle in Macbeth. I looked out, the gate opened—

Die flugel flogen klirrend auf—

and I stood at two in the morning in the Piazza del Popolo in Rome.

Of the multitudinous impressions made upon my mind by a brief sojourn in Rome, four are so indelibly stamped that time will do little to efface them. St. Peter's, the Coliseum, the Campagna, the Apollo—these objects, differing so much in kind as almost to provoke a smile in being mentioned together, rise up in memory above the many historic and artistic recollections which belong to the retrospect of Rome. Perhaps they are the very objects which the reader has seen most frequently described, and concerning which he feels absolutely certain that nothing new can be written. Partaking of this latter conviction to the fullest extent, and disclaiming the immodesty of wishing to offer any criticisms or suggestions, historical, philosophical, architectural, æsthetical, upon subjects which have been discussed with so much of learning and ability for centuries, I cannot but think that the reader will be willing to take for what it may be worth the honest account of a fresh and candid spectator as to the effect produced by them.

I can imagine nothing more confusing to a man of tolerable education, who goes to Rome in any manner qualified to appreciate its wonderful treasures of art, and hear the voice of antiquity speaking from its ruins, than the state of irresolution in which he first sets out from his hotel to see Rome, with the consciousness that he has a very limited time in which to do it. He has eaten his breakfast, perhaps, in one of the hotels in or near the Piazza di Spagna, and the toast and omelette and bit of steak seem to him very like the same things in St. James' street—it is no *prandium*, this breakfast,

and the stout English gentleman opposite speaks his own language to the waiter—and altogether it does not quite feel like Rome at all; but as he is about to make his first dash into the bewildering maze of sights that stretches around him, a rush of indescribable sensations almost overpowers him, as he thinks that it is indeed the Roma *Æterna* of the mighty past—the seat of the ancient civilization—the Rome of Cæsar, of Cicero, of Horace—the Rome over which have been thrown the enduring spells of poetry and eloquence, whose decay has become magnificent in the pages of Gibbon, and whose earlier glories revive in the ringing ballads of Macaulay.

My sojourn in Rome I knew could not be prolonged beyond a fortnight; and aware of how little could be done in that time toward seeing half its interesting remains, I determined to devote my attention entirely to a few objects, and among these I began with St. Peter's, driving to the Piazza with an impatience springing from a sort of fear, that before I reached there the vast edifice might suddenly disappear.

I alighted at the colonnade, and walked slowly across the Piazza. Two or three thousand French troops were on parade in the Piazza, but they were almost lost in the ample area; the different companies, like the obelisk and the fountains, seemed only to mark and render more perceptible the distances of the spot. Upon getting out of the carriage, the exterior disappointed me, it appeared neither so grand nor so beautiful as I had expected. With the façade I was never entirely reconciled, but I had no sooner ascended the steps to enter the vestibule than the tremendous height of the edifice struck me with great force. I fancied myself an atomy, a mere point in space, and felt as I had felt at Niagara, or in face of Mont Blanc, as I supposed, indeed, it was quite impossible I should ever feel in presence of any work of man's hands.*

* Madame de Staël attributes such a feeling to Oswald: "C'était la première fois que l'ouvrage des hommes produisait sur lui l'effet d'une merveille de la nature."

Passing rapidly across the vestibule, in a moment of intense excitement I moved aside the thick curtains of leather and entered the church. A dream of beauty was before, above, and around me, in the marbles and gold, in the far-receding lines of the splendid pavement, in the curves that played around the roof, in the general atmosphere of light that swam through the graceful arches—but the grandeur, the elevation, the immensity of the building comes not at once upon the perception. The explanation has been often given why every one is at first disappointed with the apparent magnitude of St. Peter's—that the statues and ornaments are cast upon a scale so colossal as to seem near at hand though really remote, and that the perpendicular lines are everywhere so broken as to give no idea of soaring altitude, such as we derive from the uninterrupted ascent of a Gothic column to the arch of which it forms a part. Without stopping to discuss the matter, whether this be a fault or an excellence, I mention the fact of the disappointment, and may add that this feeling was not entirely dispelled in my case, until, standing beneath the great dome, the wondrous vastness of the pile broke in upon me by almost imperceptible degrees, as I have seen St. Peter's brought out (if the reader will pardon the bathos of the illustration) from gloom in the magical tints of a chemical diorama. Then, at last was it revealed to the sense and the imagination, in all the glory of its wonderful dimensions and unexampled splendour.

St. Peter's is the only edifice I have ever seen which appeared to rise above the sectarian differences of faith and appeal to the religious sensibilities of every one who entered it. The most simple Protestant, who sees in the paintings and paraphernalia of the Romish altar so many symbols of an idolatrous worship, cannot but recognise the devotional element that sweetly broods over the great space within the dome, and pervades the building with its influence like the odour of incense. That man must, indeed, be hardened who could pass through it insensible to the feeling of reverence it in-

spires, as a fitting temple to the great Architect of the Universe. It is said that the insurgents of 1849 had determined at one time, in their revolutionary frenzy, to despoil St. Peter's, and then blow it into fragments with gunpowder. I cannot fancy the outlaw bold enough to enter the building with purposes so impious, either by ghastly torch-light or the yet more reproachful effluence of day—the AWE that resides forever within those airy spaces would quench the iconoclastic rage, and make nerveless the sacrilegious hand.

I saw religious service several times in St. Peter's, at some one of the side-chapels—once I looked down from the gallery just beneath the ball upon vespers performed at an altar in the transept, but the rites seemed mean and feeble in the immensity of the edifice; the blue wreaths from the censers melted quickly into the ample ether overhead; the tinkle of the priest's bell could scarcely be heard; and the loudest peal of the organ “fell a soft murmur on th' uninjured ear.” The lights and the dresses made a poor pageant, nor can I imagine that the most stately pomps of ceremonial, conducted by the Pope in person, attended by his whole retinue of blazing cardinals, would look other than paltry in St. Peter's, which swells far above the accessories of the Romish religion, a type of the Infinite and Eternal.

From every point of view, the dome of St. Peter's is the object on which the eye rests in looking towards Rome, and should the Cathedral be destroyed by human violence or some convulsion of nature, Rome would no longer be the cynosure of the world. We cannot think of the city apart from St. Peter's, and it may be questioned, in the event that, by relinquishing this crowning effort of the genius of Michael Angelo, we could have the Forum restored in the full perfection of its ancient magnificence, whether it would be well to make the sacrifice. We should no doubt have a superb cluster of rich heathen temples and porches, and enjoy the supreme satisfaction of putting a stop to the learned quarrels of Niebuhr and others over the topography of the Forum

Romanum, but we should lose the noblest expression of adoring reverence man has ever offered to the True God.

I had been two days in Rome before I visited the Coliseum, and the first sense it awakened was that of wonder at the great size of the ruin. The engravings and pictures of it do not convey, perhaps from the absence of objects of comparison, any adequate idea of the vast circuit or dizzy height of the walls. That it was capable of holding more than eighty thousand spectators, I knew from history; but this fact impresses the mind with no proper notion of the wide space of the arena and the lofty sweep of the arches. Dismantled as the Coliseum has been of its marbles, and wasted by the hand of time, it is eloquent in ruin beyond all the poetry that has been written of it; it is in itself a grander strain than it awoke in Byron, and speaks to us in a statelier rhetoric than it drew forth from Gibbon.* The stranger who would feel, however, all the power of the spot, and share the emotion of the Venerable Bede, should not visit it in the morning, for many disenchantments then conspire to annoy him. The crowd of sight-seers with memorandum-books in their hands, the ambuscade of deformed and idiotic beggars, and the incessant rattle of French drummers who are sent to the adjoining hills to practise the roll of the kettle-drum, each in itself is enough to disqualify one for enjoying a ramble over the broken piles of brick and travertine, and together they weary the patience, and exhaust the temper of the most imperturbable visitor. Let him rather seek the Coliseum by some unfrequented path in the repose of the afternoon when the sun rests in purple masses upon arch and terrace, and gives to every wild flower trailing its vine over the shattered wall the appearance of a drooping plume. The garish morning is too inquisitive, prying into every cranny, and laying bare the cruel chasms that decay has furrowed into the lines of stone; evening comes to mellow and subdue each harsh and jagged outline, throwing the drapery of sunset over the whole wide amphitheatre, thus combining with nature, who has

deposited upon the varied surfaces a soft mould out of which spring the rich flowers of Italy's beautiful clime. It was doubtless in the afternoon that the great games and spectacles were celebrated by the Roman Emperors in the Coliseum, and as one lingers upon the topmost wall in the lovely twilight, he may turn from Rome with its spires, and columns, and domes fading in the distance, and fancy that the seats are all occupied, and that the hush of expectancy keeps silent a vast multitude of spectators who are looking with himself to a door in the arena over which the vestal virgins sit, and from which a pale victim is soon to come forward.

It is fashionable to visit the Coliseum by moonlight, and I saw it under the radiance of a full moon, round and white as the shield of Achilles. But the contrasts of light and shade are too violent at such a time; the depths of gloom excite the imagination with something of tragic horror, while the eye loses the delicious tints of orange and purple, of which the afternoon is so lavish, upon the wasted structure. Pensiveness then yields to dejection, and dejection deepens into pain.

Mr. Hillard, in that admirable work entitled "Six Months in Italy," which is a "guide, philosopher, and friend" to any one travelling in that storied region, has shown by a most gratifying demonstration that the Coliseum is far more picturesque and interesting as a ruin than it would be could we see it in its perfect condition. We may, therefore, dismiss all regrets over the spoliation of the vast edifice, and rejoice that in its dilapidated state what has been lost in elegance has been gained in effect, while the graceful presides over every fissure and the suggestive whispers to us from all its corridors.

Everybody knows what the Campagna is—that far-spreading expanse between the Mediterranean and the mountains, in the centre of which stands Rome. From the ball of St. Peter's I looked out upon it, edged by the flashing sea and girded by the blue Sabine Hills, with Soracte rising in solitary grandeur in the inter-

mediate horizon; and as I looked, the breeze blowing seaward across its surface seemed to murmur an invitation—"Come, Rome will tire you with its marble gods and unexplained ruins; come and see the beauty which artists have as yet never been able to comprehend; come and hear the breathings of that voice which poets have failed to interpret." From whatever point of Rome or its immediate environs I cast my eye towards the Campagna, from the crumbling arches of Caracalla's Baths, from the knoll where stands the "stern, round tower" of the tomb of Cecilia Metella, the invitation was repeated, and I know not if the regret I could not help feeling at the shortness of my sojourn in Rome sprang so much from any other disappointment as that of not being able to traverse the Campagna everywhere, on foot and in the saddle, and familiarize myself with all its aspects of soothing and tranquil beauty. As you pass the wall of Rome, you enter at once into the alluring solitude, unbroken by any objects that are not in perfect harmony with its sweet and mournful desolation. Here the hut of a peasant is built under a gentle declivity, and there an old bridge is thrown over some bright streamlet, the fragment of a column lifts itself yonder from the rich turf, and across the plain for miles stretch the long lines of the Roman acqueducts; but the unvarying monotony of the immense expanse remains, and silence has here its perpetual home, a deep and ancient silence that the song of the lark and the occasional report of a sportsman's fowling-piece seem scarcely able to disturb. Nature, prodigal of life, as if in mockery of the prevailing sadness, clothes the earth in a flora ever gorgeous and luxuriant, and bright-winged insects float in the sunshine of October, over the blossoms of the daisy peeping up on all sides from the grass. Nor does the beauty of the Campagna weary you with its uniformity, for the undulations of the ground admit of great varieties of expression in the landscape. Just as at sea, when the waves are rolling high, you will mount the crest of one and gaze far and wide over the weltering deep, and

afterwards sink into the hollow with only a narrow circuit of sky open to the view, so in the Campagna you will now and then reach the summit of some swelling mound from which an ocean of verdure is seen heaving around as far as the eye can reach, and again descend into a basin with a horizon closing nearly upon you; but from the mound you will catch at every fresh turn the distant points of the landscape in new lights, and from the basin see some neighbouring mountain set in a frame which displays its graceful outlines to unexpected advantage. The artists residing in Rome have an exhaustless wealth of study in the Campagna, and you cannot come upon one, sitting at the base of some shattered pillar and sketching the scene before him, without a kind of respectful pity that, let his pencil be ever so happy, the curvilinear grace and roseate hues of the original will not be adequately reproduced upon his canvas.

The geology of the Campagna is twofold—it has its architectural and its organic layers in which the eye of science may detect the successive civilizations that were erected above the surface, and the progressive changes that have marked the physical history of the earth. The researches of a Gell or a Bunsen may discover, beneath the fragmentary memorials of Roman greatness which strew the plain, the evidences of a yet more ancient Pelasgic power, while a Buckland or a Murchison going deeper still may read the whole record of its conversion from a waste of waters into its present form, through the agency of fire upheaving the land, which gradually underwent the genial transformation of less violent agencies, until vegetation, nourished by the early and the latter rains, arose from the soil, as Lucretius has so beautifully described it, in the passage beginning

Postremo, pereunt imbres ubi eos pater æther
In gremium matris Terræ precipitavit:
*At nitidæ surgunt fruges, ramique virescunt
Arboribus.*

To the student of government, too, the Campagna is not without its suggestions, as gazing from the heights of Frascati

upon the wide and exuberant, but unproductive area, or stopping on the way-side to see the withered harvesters gleaning its fatal crops, he ponders on the ills of a clerical mal-administration;—but it was not as an artist seeking bits of nature for his portfolio, nor as an archæologist puzzling my poor brains with the manifestations of a past age, nor as a politician going out to see with how little wisdom the world is governed, that I love to muse in the Campagna; it was as an idle dreamer, a lover of the beautiful, delighting to revel in the rich sunshine and the balmy atmosphere, and no one who woos the spirit of the Campagna in this tender mood, will find her indifferent or unresponsive.

The noblest view of the Campagna that I was permitted to enjoy was from the terrace of the Villa d'Este, near Tivoli. I had gone with a charming party of friends to spend the day at the ancient Tibur, and we had employed the forenoon and midday in making the circuit of the musical Cascatelles, and dining under the shadow of the Sibyl's Temple, exquisite temple, bad dinner, delicious day, and so we came in the afternoon to climb up the mouldy hanging-gardens of the aristocratic Villa d'Este, taking all manner of liberties with the dilapidated Tritons of the broken fountains, and filling the silent, grass-grown walks with the echoes of unfamiliar laughter. When we reached the lofty terrace, where the visitor looks down many hundred feet upon the open country, the sun was streaming across the Campagna in horizontal shafts of light, which broke against the hill-sides around us in shattered splendour. The chilliness of the evening warned us it was time to return, but still we lingered as under the spell of enchantment. The Campagna darkened from orange to purple, and from purple to a dusky brown; as the sun stooped nearer to the Mediterranean, his classic Thetis, and finally sank on her breast, and over the monotonous waste one single object stood against the sky—it was the dome of St. Peter's, looming in strange and portentous grandeur out of a region of shadows, remote, mysterious and lone.

The Campagna and St. Peter's thus became fixed upon the memory together for all time.

Two or three mornings in the Vatican, among the statues, induced me to think that, in the course of as many months, a lover of sculpture might, by diligent study, acquire a creditable knowledge of its contents. Fearing that my own impressions would be weakened by a divided admiration among many objects, upon entering the first gallery I walked straight on, looking neither to the right nor to the left, like the princess in the Arabian story on her way to the golden fountain, until I reached the little apartment of the Belvidere which is glorified by the Apollo. Until we have a new coinage of superlatives, I am sure I shall never be able to speak of this statue properly. To say that it is the very perfection of manly strength and beauty is nothing—it is action, life, grace, music, perfume in stone! it illuminates the cabinet in which it stands, as a lamp lights up a shrine, and brings the Apollo of ancient mythology before the mind's eye, as the old poets saw him when he walked in the dim forests, and the recesses of the mountain became doedal in the radiance of his flashing locks. Some of the critics have contended that it is in his character as a medical man that Apollo is here represented, coming into Athens at the time of the great plague—and one might fancy that before his bright footsteps the abhorred shapes of disease and death would flee away, and that his benign presence would shed joy and health and happiness around. The *pose* of the figure so familiar to every reader gives to it the air of motion, and like some other statues, it inspires you with an idea that it may step off from its pedestal; but unlike all others I have seen, it imparts also the confidence that when arrested it will assume an attitude of equal power, and grace and animation.

I have nothing more to say of statues, or paintings, or buildings in Rome—though I shall ever retain distinct and pleasurable recollections of many—of the rosy Aurora in the Rospigliosi, of the sweet Beatrice Cenci, of the truthful and

impressive Dying Gladiator, of the grand Moses by Michael Angelo, of the awful figures in the Last Judgment, of the majestic groups in the School of Athens, and of the celestial glory of the Transfiguration—and of many churches and palaces, that the reader will visit when he goes to Rome, after the manner of all men who make the pilgrimage. He will drive, too, without the walls to the English Cemetery, where the roses are growing from the dust of Keats and Shelley, and he must not omit to make the tour of the grounds of the Villa Borghese, whose long vistas of shade and glorious expanse of turf have suffered in no degree from that republican violence which in 1849 defaced the ornaments of the main avenues, and broke the basins of the fountains. Before this spoliation, the Villa Borghese was the darling show-place of Rome; but it may be doubted whether in its mournful decay, the general aspect of the spot does not better consort with the peculiar beauty of desolation that belongs to the Eternal City, than if it still displayed the careful hand of the arborcultivist.

But, while I am reluctant to tire the reader with further descriptions of works of art and the introduction of other themes belonging to Rome, there is one subject so closely connected with the city, and which associates itself so intimately with all that the memory retains of Rome's past and present grandeur, that silence concerning it would be unpardonable. It is the Roman flea. I have read Eothen, and have never visited the East, but I am incredulous of the superior vivacity and muscularity of the Oriental flea, and feel satisfied that great injustice has been done to the Roman insect by the gifted author of that charming work, who does not introduce it at all in his account of the Congress of Fleas at Jerusalem. The flea of Rome is as much an institution of the country as the Papacy, and, in spite of the magnificent climax of Mr. Macaulay concerning the duration of the Holy See, I believe it destined to survive it. The flea attends you everywhere, and enters into your enjoyment of every object in Rome. It skips about in St.

Peter's, having ample room there for the exercise of all its energies. It awaits you in the Vatican, and is roused to unusual activity by the fumes of incense in the Sistine Chapel. You have disagreeable interviews with it in St. John Lateran, and it lies perdu in the Barberini Palace. Almost all your examinations of works of art are affected more or less by the intervention of fleas, until you wonder if the ancestors of these pests bit Cicero, as he thundered against Verres, or if, like *atra cura* in the ode of Horace, they mounted behind Augustus as he rode forth in the market-place. In vain shall you try to escape the Roman flea or to prevent its escaping you. It proceeds by forced marches, and as Napoleon suddenly came down upon the Austrians in one place when they had just before felt his attack in another, so this pulcose enemy will astonish you by a "fire in the rear" immediately after you have been made quite certain of his operations in a totally different quarter. And there is no such *vis a tergo* as his bite. You are not left in even a momentary doubt of what the force is—it is your favorite flea—you recognize him at once, as you do Carlo Dolce or Spagnoletto, by his style. Spagnoletto is, perhaps, the better illustration, because he loved to paint St. Sebastians transfixed with arrows, and the poisoned barb of the foe might well recall the fine agony of that youthful martyrdom. I used to conjecture how the inhabitants of Rome could ever become accustomed to this constant annoyance, but I learned from an acute observer of Roman life and manners that they actually learned in time to find a pleasant excitement in the bite, and that to live without fleas would probably be to them an insipid and spiritless existence.

If the stranger could habituate himself into indifference to these vermin, I should think Rome the most delightful place of residence on earth. The repose of the city and its isolation from the great, throbbing, active world of Europe and America, render it especially attractive to the quiet, meditative person who has no great projects of ambition to work out, and an easy competency in his af-

fairs. The stagnation which gathers under the chair of St. Peter is favorable in a high degree, to the studies which the memorials around him would invite the temporary resident to pursue, and I think it may fairly admit of a doubt whether, under any other government, the Rome of the past could be contemplated to such advantage. A liberal government, stimulating the energies of the people and giving freedom of thought and opinion to all over whom it extended, would no doubt work an important change in the aspects of the city; it would make the Campagna wave with golden harvests, and cause the banks of the Tiber to resound with the hum of industry, but the clash of engines would jar upon the eloquent silence, and the hand of improvement would only mar the beautiful ruin. I saw the Pope performing High Mass in person in the Sistine Chapel, and an old gentleman of milder, more benevolent features is not to be found among Raphael's portraits.

Of the artists' studios in Rome, I visited but three—Overbeck's was closed—of which two were those of eminent sculptors—Gibson and Crawford. I think it was not pride of country which made me give the palm of superiority in art to my own countryman, whose workshop, populous with forms of grace and elegance, contained a plaster model of his equestrian Washington, designed for my own city, a noble effort, securing a lasting fame for its author. The third studio, in which I was often a lounge, was that of a Boston artist of my own name, Mr. C. G. Thompson, to whom I was indebted for many gratifications, not the least of which was the sight of an exquisite picture of a girl of the Campagna, done with Titianesque delicacy and skill.

Boswell tells us that, at a dinner given

by Sir Joshua Reynolds, the conversation turning upon Horace's Journey to Brundisium, Dr. Johnson remarked that the brook which the poet describes remained unchanged, and that he had often wondered how it happened that small brooks, such as this, kept the same situation for ages, notwithstanding earthquakes, by which even mountains have been removed, and agriculture, which produces such a variation of the surface of the earth.* Considering the constant change in the water itself and its incessant renewal, it is strange, indeed, that this type of the transient and the "passing away" should endure beyond the mass of rock, which we should select as the symbol of permanence. The water in Rome is suggestive of a kindred thought. Bubbling up everywhere, in a hundred fountains, and refreshing the eye with its purity amid prevailing squalor, it teaches us how works of utility survive those of grandeur, though the former, addressed to the immediate wants of the builders, seemed likely to perish sooner than the stately monuments of pride which were designed to perpetuate the glory and state of the monarchs by whom they were inaugurated. Nero's Golden House has passed away, but the Claudian Aqueduct yet pours its healthful and copious waters into Rome, and when the traveller has taken his last stroll on the Pincian, and paid his little bill for mosaics in the Via Condotti, and sent his pale Cenci to be packed up at the banker's, as the diligence stops a moment on the road-side, where the last glimpse of St. Peter's can be caught, the arches of the aqueducts will remind him of the Fountain of Trevi, and he will cherish the hope that the popular superstition may, in his individual case, prove true, that all who drink of that fountain during their first visit may see Rome again!

*The thought does not seem to have been original with the great Samuel. For when Cambridge, one of Sir Joshua's guests on the occasion, quoted a passage from a Spanish writer as pertinent to the subject, "Sir," said Johnson, in his oracular way, "that is taken from Janus Vitalis—

'————— immota labescunt
Et quæ perpetuo sunt agitata manent.'"

—Boswell's Johnson, Croker's Edition, vol. vii., p. 83.

The Council called by Pius the Ninth to consider the question of the Immaculate Conception, was just about to convene in Rome at the time of my departure, and I was very reluctant to leave at so interesting a moment. I had seen the fine equipages of the Cardinals dashing about the Quirinal with unusual bustle and ostentation, and the most eminent prelates of the Church from all parts of the world had been arriving daily during my stay at the Hotel d'Angleterre; but the hour was hastening when I should be compelled to turn my face homeward, and I had to choose between the Council and Naples—a choice which did not long embarrass me. I got into the diligence or malle-post, or whatever it was, in the Piazza di Spagna with a Catholic padre, a well-informed New-England professor and his lady, and a young Englishman, and set out by the Appian Way for Porto d'Anzio, a point on the Mediterranean where we were to take steamer for Naples. The padre spoke indifferent English, and had visited America, where he had met with some droll adventures among the Mormons, with which he entertained us, and the Englishman gave us a pleasant account of how he had contrived to elude the vigilance of the door-keepers and get into the Sistine Chapel in a calico shirt and frock coat when High Mass was going on—so that with the *bonhomme* of our companions, and the beautiful glimpses of the Campagna afforded at the top of every gentle hill, the drive of five hours was delightful.

A few wretched houses along the smiling shore, (out of the window of one of which leaned a pretty, dark-eyed girl smoking a cigar,) constitute Porto d'Anzio. A vile affair in the shape of a steamer lay off the crumbling pier, on which we embarked, and stood out to sea about sunset, and the next morning upon going on deck, I found the boat lazily rocking upon the surface of the Bay of Naples, about a cable's length from the landing. There was the city rising before us; there was St. Elmo towering above; there was Vesuvius with its flag of smoke waving in the still air, and all around, the blue sparkling water, with Capri and

Procida emerging from it and gilded by the early sun.

Peerless Parthenope, nonpareil Naples, sitting by the tideless sea skirted by villa and volcano, city of the glittering crescent and paradise of pickpockets, how shall I apostrophize thee! *Un pezzo di cielo caduto in terra*—a shining gem dropped from heaven upon earth, thou art, says Sannazzaro; but the partial poet forgot to say with how much of the dirt and impurity of earth the gem had become encrusted. Naples is preëminently the city of startling contrasts:—lovely in the distance and horribly unclean in the near approach; rich in the relics of a past civilization, and showing everywhere the marks of a tyrannical government and a debased religion; its streets crowded with priests and soldiers, ladies and lazzaroni, velvet and vermin; its splendid palaces throwing their shadows upon the wretched dens where crime and poverty have their permanent abode,—there cannot be on earth a place which calls so largely for antithesis in the description of it. To a person visiting it after Rome, the teeming population of the city, and the headlong life and bustle of the Toledo are very striking. The Toledo is perhaps the most crowded thoroughfare, at certain hours of the day, in Europe; the tide of human life though it is stronger than that which sets up the Italian Boulevard at Paris; it is even more resistless, because compressed within narrower limits, than the ceaseless stream pouring along Fleet-street or over London-Bridge. And yet Naples has no roar like that of a great city, the capital of a great nation. Retire a short space from the suburbs, climb the hill that overlooks the tomb of Virgil, and turning from the beauteous, bountiful aspect of earth, and sea, and sky, listen to the noise that greets the ear. It is muffled. Shelley's exquisite line, suggested by the very scene, is accurately descriptive of it—

The city's voice itself is soft like solitude's.

No hum of industry, no shock of ponderous machinery comes upon the slumberous air, which is unstirred by the smoke of foundries. All is tranquility—

but not peace, for the quiet of Neapolitan life is a treacherous quiet, which, gathering with the shades of evening, is characterized by the frequent play of the stiletto, and many a Calabrian has unwillingly complied, of late years as well as in times gone by, with the injunction of the Italian proverb—*Vede Napoli e poi mori*—see Naples and die!

Neapolitan sight-seeing is the most unsatisfactory of all enjoyments of the kind, because it must be pursued under a constant sense of being swindled. The exactions of the door-keepers and guides are incessant, and all the more provoking from the fact that they are not foreseen, and cannot be guarded against. The Museo Borbonico, for example, that rich repository of works of art, filled with the priceless mosaics and frescoes of Herculaneum and Pompeii, is a colossal imposition. It is supposed to be open to the public several hours every day in the week, and the fact is cited as a proof of the liberality of King Bomba; but the visitor finds that a fee of admission is demanded at every separated door of entrance, so much for the Marbles, and so much for the Egyptian Museum, which not only puts him into an unphilosophic fret with the government, but gives to one of the most interesting exhibitions in the world the air of a travelling circus and menagerie, that erects four or five tents in a cluster, and charges an additional quarter each for the calf with five legs, and the Ethiopian Serenaders, and the Cosmorama of four Continents. It is positively degrading to the Pompeian Collection to stick up a dirty fellow at the door of each apartment, and bid him demand of every one four carlini, in the name of Ferdinand II. for the privilege of entering. I make no complaint of the fee. If the Spanish Bourbon who rules over the Two Sicilies, being somewhat in want of money, finds it expedient to play Barnum with his curiosities, he has a perfect right to do so; but let him levy his charge at the great door. Let him say that the price of seeing the building shall be ten dollars—and what you pay for all the apartments amounts nearly to that sum—and there will be no ground of ob-

jection. The visitor will dismiss the matter from his mind the moment he has entered, and be able to survey the rare and wonderful contents of the building with something of composure.

I am not going to attempt the Museo Borbonico in these pages. The rooms devoted to the memorials of the exhumed cities are full of a strange interest, as revealing to us the private life of a people whose altars were erected to Bacchus mostly, and whose fairest idol was Venus worshipped in a thousand images of sensuous beauty. The insight given to us by the various articles of domestic and personal use, into the habits and daily routine of the Pompeians, is so extraordinary, that one almost shrinks back from the examination as involving impertinence and intrusion. We would not go into our neighbour's wine cellar or seek to ascertain what dishes he has for dinner—still less would we pry into the mysterious arcana of his wife's *chambre de lit*, with the view of knowing whether that lady purchases her complexion; but here we have submitted to our inspection not only the *pocula* once red with Falerian, and the plates which smoked with the Pompeian pasty; but Madame's rings, and pins, and mirrors, and carmine, from which we learn how hard it was for Pyrrha, after she had taken a husband, to resign her conquests among the abundant roses, and how resolutely she fought old Time when he came to rob her cheeks of their early Pæstum bloom. The rich, gay frescoes which adorned the walls of the Pompeian houses are wonderfully fresh and beautiful—their style is that of airy grace and playfulness, and it is easy to see that the occupants of houses so decorated were accustomed to “let the serious part of life go by like the neglected sand.” They pourtray with delicious effect that pagan philosophy which runs through the dithyrambics of Horace—Life is short, youth and love alone can bless it, seize the fleeting moments, crown them with flowers, lull them with music, steep them in wine—

Time flies—Death threatens to destroy—
The wise condense life's scattered joy

Within a narrow measure:

Then, Laura, bring the sparkling bowl,

And let us yield the raptured soul

To laughter, love, and pleasure.

We may not wonder that among a people wedded to this philosophy, the doctrines of Paul seemed harsh, cold and forbidding, and that the pleasure-loving Pompeians protested against them in theatre, and forum, and circus, until the red tide of desolation came down from Vesuvius, and the city was hid from the gaze of man.

Of the grand sculptures in the Museo Borbonico, the finest unquestionably is that of the Toro Farnese, representing the heathen story of Dirce bound to the bull by the Sons of Antiope, in revenge for the wrong committed on their mother. Dirce was a flirt who enticed away from Antiope the affections of Lycus, her royal husband, and to punish such conduct, Zethus and Amphion, sons of the injured queen, resolved to bind Dirce to an infuriated bull. They have just succeeded in fastening the cords around the horns of the animal, when Antiope relenting, steps in and prevails upon the young gentlemen to release their victim. This, as may be supposed, is no such easy matter; but the delineation of the story in stone must have been almost as difficult. There is no sentiment expressed in the group but that of heroic contest with danger under a sense of duty; but the attitudes are noble, and the whole work is one of great power. Another group in marble of a more pleasing character, is The Faun carrying the boy Bacchus on his shoulders, a composition full of archness and sportiveness. The picture gallery, at the time of my visit, was being robbed of some of its best pieces. The King's exchequer needing accessions to sustain his large army, he had been compelled to dispose of some of his treasures of art to the British National Gallery. Thus will the great relics of former civilization find their way surely at last to the centres of commercial industry, and the day is not far distant when they will begin to cross the Atlantic.

Of course I went to Pompeii. They have a railway now running by the spot, and a Pompeii station; but I preferred going in an open carriage with the New-England professor and his lady, and our English acquaintance. We walked about the strange, sad old ruins from the House of the Tragic Poet to the great amphitheatre, rummaged among the wine jars of Diomed, and plucked roses from the Temple of Jupiter. It inspires a melancholy pity, the old corpse of a city despoiled of its ornaments and laid bare to the gaze, under the astonishing blue sky which bends over and smiles on mountain, and plain, and rippling sea. Bulwer has told its story with sweet, tragic eloquence of description, and his creations seem to glide among the columns, as we stroll around and try to escape the sing-song of the cicerone. One can fancy the amphitheatre crowded, as it was eighteen hundred years ago, on that fine summer afternoon when the torrent of fiery ruin ran hissing and molten among its thousands of spectators, and, looking to the mountain, now so peaceful with its little wreath of vapor, white and delicate as a kerchief waved by a maiden, curling upward in the blue air, can imagine it pouring out the wrath of offended Heaven upon the doomed city of sin.

We made other excursions around Naples to Baïæ, and Lake Avernus, and the Cave of the Sibyl, but the enjoyment to me was always in the scenery. The eye never tired of the fair line of coast and the harmonious hills; but a curious, and it will be thought a whimsical, resemblance, suggested in the outline of Capri, marred the pleasure afforded by the seaward view. Capri, as seen from Naples, looks exactly like an immense metallic corpse-preserver, such as they exhibit in those ghastly windows of the undertakers' shops in Broadway. The peculiar rise of the line for the breast and head, and again for the feet, all are seen in the shape of Capri, and I anathematised the invention which has spoiled for me the most exquisite marine view in the portfolio of nature.

If the man who journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves,

had written an account of his adventures, I think the earlier stages of his progress would be found very nearly in correspondence with our ascent of Vesuvius.

Such systematic and deliberate imposition as was practised upon us, I never saw before. It was the very poetry of swindling. Although we made a bargain with the local guide beforehand, comprising all expenses, he contrived with admirable ingenuity to make us pay first for one extra and then for another, until we lost all respect for him, and should not have been much distressed to see him slip into the crater. But the fever of irritation into which one is wrought up by the ceaseless importunities of such scoundrels, is soothed and driven away by the enchanting prospect from the cone. Naples should be seen from the top of Vesuvius if one would be impressed by the full beauty of its unrivalled situation. Looking down from that elevated point on the amethystine sea and the sparkling city, the whole brilliant scene becomes a part of memory, and it is a subject for

perpetual thankfulness that one has been permitted to gaze upon it.

With Naples this loose record of travel ends. In a few weeks after I had lain extended on the side of the volcano drinking in the inspiration of the lovely locality, I was at home again, looking back upon Europe, with its pomps and pageants, its cathedrals and Alps, its sweet paintings and sunny landscapes, as a dream. But it is well to dream such dreams and see such visions. I venture to hope that such of my readers as have visited the cities, mountains, and lakes I have herein attempted to describe, have had their recollections of Europe agreeably freshened by even these unskilful sketches, while such as have not yet been "Across the Atlantic," I trust may, sooner or later, get there, and look with their own eyes upon those magnificent and imposing objects which they have seen so dimly and imperfectly through the medium of my narrative. To the one class I say *bon voyage!*—to the other *adieu!*